DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 291 779 TM 011 064

AUTHOR Grice, Michael
TITLE Project Return, 1986-1987, Portland Public Schools. Evaluation Report.
INSTITUTION Portland Public Schools, OR. Research and Evaluation Dept.
PUB DATE Oct 87
NOTE 29p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Black Students; *Disadvantaged Youth; *Dropout Programs; Elementary Secondary Education; Parent Counseling; Program Evaluation; *Public Schools; Student Placement; Truancy
IDENTIFIERS *Portland School District OR

ABSTRACT

Projects Return constitutes an attempt by the Portland (Oregon) Public Schools to bring school dropouts back into the school system. During 1986-87, Project Return handled 123 percent more referrals than during 1985-86, the project's first year; the actual figures were 1,091 and 489, respectively. Economically disadvantaged youth make up a large portion of the target group. The three-step procedure designed to reorient truant students includes: (1) assessment of referral; (2) identification and contact with student and family; and (3) institution of an interview, status report, and placement. Transitional classrooms for referred students and counseling of parents and students are central to the intervention methodology. Evaluation of 1986-87 interventions combines data from interviews, unobtrusive measures, and use of descriptive statistics. At the end of the first year, obvious disproportionalities were noted among middle school students, Afro-American students, and students residing in North Portland. Reductions in truancy were effected for all of these groups during 1986-87. Extensive tabulated evaluation data are provided by target group. Attached appendices include Oregon Revised Statutes 339.065, 339.080 and diagrams of referral distribution by grade grouping. (TJH)

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EVALUATION
REPORT

PROJECT RETURN
1986 — 1987

PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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October, 1987

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PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS
EVALUATION REPORT: PROJECT RETURN, 1986-87

Department of Research and Evaluation
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Portland, Oregon
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October, 1987

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ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY

The response to students "giving up" school and foregoing the pursuit of an education is a complex and troubling matter in 1987. Project Return, in behalf of the Portland Public Schools, has made its business providing such a response. The first year implementation was expanded and redesigned to respond to a projection of a growing "non-attending" population. At least in terms of identifying the parameters of the population of students who do not attend school regularly, the expansion was timely. The 1986-87 Project Return handled 123% more referrals than in the first year. Effective deployment of human resources achieved declines in targeted areas and with overrepresented populations.

School children referred to Project Return are often victims of economic hardship. This circumstance sometimes contributes to altered family values. Frequently, family resources are directed toward matters that may cause schooling not to be the dominant priority for that family.

In other cases, economic hardship, is overshadowed by the student's own experiences in an academic environment. Some students apparently misunderstand or have been misguided regarding the dynamics of classroom performance. Those students simply fail to perform or cope effectively with the schooling process and deliberately avoid the pain of ridicule, inappropriate teaching styles, or failure to progress. Low self-esteem, pregnancy, drug abuse, and ineffective parental influence add to the complex sum of irregular school attendance.

The number of students serviced by Project Return climbed from 489 in the first year of operation to 1091 in the second year. At the end of the first year, obvious disproportionalities were noted among middle school students, African American students, and the students residing in North Portland when compared to the District overall.

Reductions in percentages of truants among both middle school students (-10.6%) and African American students (-7.0%) occurred this year. Reductions in the percentage of students from North Portland who were truant was also reduced (-5.7%).

These shifts in percentages represent a reduction in disproportionality among African American students and students from North Portland. Where Project Return has directed its resources, declines in truancy have occurred. Still, problems persist. Alternative programs, especially for middle school students, are in short supply. Where they do exist, so does a waiting list. Negotiation with alternative settings early in the year and improved data management for longitudinal demographic purposes are among the key recommendations.

INTRODUCTION

Oregon Revised Statutes (O.R.S.) 339.065 and 339.080 (Appendix A) provide the basis for the operation of Portland Public Schools Project Return. The function and the mission of Project Return is to identify students who are out of school and find ways of steering them back into formal educational options.

The primary objective of Project Return is to identify, contact, and counsel students who have left school or are failing to attend regularly for the express purpose of re-enrolling them in a regular or alternative educational program. Commensurate with the direct contact of students is notification of the parents and a review of parental rights and responsibilities as defined in O.R.S. 339.080. An informal assessment to isolate the causes for patterns of unexcused absence from school is among the primary tools used by Project Return staff to make recommendations for re-enrollment or appropriate alternative educational program placement.

In 1986-87, Project Return expanded its operation over the inaugural year program by adding two attendance counselors, one half-time clerk, one classroom teacher, and .75 FTE of support from the Office of Student Services to assist with data management. In addition, Multnomah County contributed one full-time counselor to work with school site personnel.

Project Return has discovered many things about the population of young people who do not regularly attend school. The demographics of the first year's operation are matched by the second year. Patterns of chronic irregular attendance and effective reponses are clearer. Still, the known reasons for students staying away from school appear to be just beyond the reach of the public schools alone to prevent.

Sustained return to school is a joint venture between Project Return, the schools, the parents, and the student. In the original plan local law enforcement had a role, but phased themselves out gradually due to the impracticality of detaining or punishing truant students. This reality reduced their deterrent effectiveness.

This evaluation focuses on adjustments in the program during the second year. The evaluation describes changes in terms of the quantity and quality of the delivery of services; and the effectiveness in meeting the primary goal of Project Return: "returning" students to an appropriate educational program.

This evaluation report displays relevant data, describes the project and the strategies that were employed, and reports the results of Project Return in the 1986-87 school year. In addition, comparisons are offered between the Year 1 and Year 2 operations as well as a five month follow up study on the students serviced in the first year of the project.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Evaluation of the 1986-87 Project Return combines data from interviews, unobtrusive measures, and the use of descriptive statistics to provide a composite of the strengths and weaknesses in the program's second year.

Monthly records of referrals, student contacts, descriptive data, counseling sessions, and student placement were forwarded to the Office of Student Services. Project Return records as well as staff and school support personnel served as sources of information.

The purpose of the evaluation is to describe the extent to which Project Return was successfully implemented in 1986-87. Comparisons were made between the first and second years of operation as well as a description of the demographics in the follow-up study which traced the year one participant group with a five month benchmark. Recommendations which flow from the conclusions are intended to guide the program to improved effectiveness.

The collection and compilation of individual and student group information comprise the basic methodology. Anecdotal records supplement these data. An interpretation and a summary of the implementation data are the products. These data are used to describe the scope of the project and to quantify the implementation activities. The conclusions represent an interpretation and summary of the data. The conclusions and recommendations combine to aid in understanding how the program might be more effective.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Return was expanded for the 1986-87 school year. Improvements in space and additions in staff are the more definitive changes from year one to year two. In a move from the "portable" quarters at the old Monroe High School site in Portland's near East Side, Project Return was provided space at the Whitaker Middle School site in northeast Portland. This space opened the way for the "Transition Classroom", a recommended addition, for increasing the chances of a sustained return for students into mainstream academic environments.

Eligibility

Students with a history of enrollment in the Portland Public Schools are eligible and enter the program by one of three methods:

1. Referral by a school administrator based on eight unexcused half days within a twenty day period (ORS 339.065); or

2. Self-referral by the student; or

3. Referral by parent/guardian of chronically absent students.

When students are identified by Project Return staff, school administration, or local law enforcement officials, their attendance is verified through school records and a referral is generated by school officials when appropriate.

Verified enrollment and attendance information is essential to structuring the attendance counselor caseload. Many of the families that experience truancy are transient. This affects the securing of valid enrollment data as well as the time needed to service a student/client.

Services

Project return provided a range of responses to truant students. The project evaluates each case individually and targets an "appropriate" response. The project's priority was to re-enroll the students in school. However, project staff found, in some cases, that basic needs called for pre-eminent attention. Thus, a number of families were directed to social service agencies for food, clothing, shelter, or professional counseling as part of Project Return's strategy for re-enrollment prior to direct re-enrollment efforts.

Typically, telephone contact was the initial follow-up to a referral. The purpose of the contact is to determine the status of the student and the cause(s) for excessive absence from

school. Discussions often occur first with the student, but ultimately involve the parent/guardian. The phone contact is followed by an appointment either at home or at the Project Return offices. The objective of the interview is to achieve a more in-depth assessment of the student's status and potential for a successful return to an educational program.

Placement Procedures

Project Return provides a three step procedure to re-orient students toward the goal of completing school.

Step One: Assessment of referral.
Step Two: Identification and contact with student and family.
Step Three: Interview, status report, determination of appropriate placement.

The placement procedure is a negotiated agreement with the neighborhood school administrator, the school last attended, or an appropriate educational alternative. Even when students are eager to return to school, placement may be delayed because of inadequate space in the desired program. It is an unfortunate reality that such obstacles can contribute to the student electing to remain out of school or revert to truancy. The "Transition Classroom" was designed to remedy that occasional circumstance.

Once a student is identified, interviewed, advised, and placed in a school or program, Project Return assumes a limited monitoring function. In the 1986-87 program, Multnomah County provided a staff person who made periodic visits at several schools to follow-up on "returned" students. This counseling approach gave support to the students and increased the available time for attendance counselors to carry out their caseload assignments in the field. The school day follow-up is an important part of sustaining attendance for "returned" students.

Often, additional support services both in school and in the private sector are identified to assist the student. Subsequently, the school staff is alerted to the student/family need for support. The lack of project resources for full-time follow-up was a problem in the program's first year. Multnomah County's response has improved the likelihood of sustained return to school.

The most frequent respondents for alternative placement and/or support have been: Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center, Albina Youth Opportunity School, Youth Service Centers (North/Northeast/Northwest), The Business Youth Exchange, and the Portland Private Industry Council.

Transition Classroom

One of the key discoveries in the program's first year of operation was the potential for delay between the referral/assessment phase and the actual placement in an appropriate educational program. The Transition classroom was designed for students who were prepared to return to school, but for whom a receiving site was not ready to receive them. Without a transition classroom, Project Return was processing students but unable to deliver on their primary goal to "return" students to school. This adversely affected the credibility of the program and contributed to students remaining out of school.

The Transition Classroom is intended to prevent loss of contact with the students who had been successfully located and processed. This feature of the program protected the investment of the attendance counselor and other program resources. It also served to mediate the experience of "transitioning" back into formal educational settings. In some cases this was especially appropriate due to the extended period of time that students may have been out of school.

Each student enrolled in the Transition Classroom is administered a form of the Portland Preliminary Placement Test. The results of that test are used in designing an instructional program at an appropriate level. Typically, elementary and middle school students are provided five instructional periods each day in math reading, language, social studies, and spelling.

High school students are provided a similar diet of instruction. There is an attempt to have instruction in the Transition Classroom correspond to the coursework not completed by students due to irregular attendance. Information is either gathered from the school of prior attendance or in cooperation with a school identified for placement. Schools have consistently shown cooperation in granting credit for work completed in accordance with course and district requirements.

Up to sixty days is allowed for students to "stabilize" in the Transition Classroom. Even after a prospective receiving school is identified, students may remain in the Transition Classroom the balance of sixty days to establish a pattern of attendance, or to complete accredited course work in progress.

As part of the initial assessment, an "Exit Plan" is devised setting goals for the student in the area of attendance and performance. Attendance is monitored and instructional support provided commensurate with Exit Plan objectives.

The clear purpose of the Transition Classroom is to provide an alternative environment to stabilize and reinforce regular attendance, identify and assist with academic deficiencies, and provide the best possible assurance of a successful "return" for identified students.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Tables 1.0, 1.1, 1.2, 2.0, 3.0, 4.0 and 5.0 represent the 1986-87 statistical summary of Project Return.

Table 1.0

PROJECT RETURN, 1986-87
DISTRIBUTION OF REFERRALS BY GRADE

GRADE		
K	16	1.5%
1	30	2.7
2	28	2.6
3	21	1.9
4	34	3.1
5	36	3.3
6	32	2.9
7	56	5.1
8	99	9.1
9	325	29.8
10	234	21.4
11	137	12.6
12	43	4.0
TOTAL	1091	100.0%

The great majority of students (72.9%) referred to Project Return are clustered in grades 8 through 11. The surprising pattern uncovered in the 1985-86 data which shows irregular attendance referrals extending downward to kindergarten continues to persist.

Table 1.1

DISTRIBUTION OF REFERRALS BY GRADE CLUSTER

GRADES	N	%
K-5	165	15.1%
6-8	187	17.2
9-12	739	67.7
TOTALS	1091	100.0%

Table 1.2

DISTRIBUTION OF REFERRALS BY GRADE CLUSTER

GRADES	N	%
K-5	165	15.1%
6-8	187	17.2
9-10	559	51.2
11-12	180	16.5
TOTALS	1091	100.0%

Making the adjustment to high school appears to compound whatever else may be contributing to the pattern of absence from school for identified children. Table 1.2 shows more than half of all Project Return referrals (51.2%) are concentrated in the first two years of high school. Better than 60% of that number are ninth graders alone; people making a physiological and social adjustments to new worlds. Significant, but not surprising.

Table 2.0

DISTRIBUTION OF REFERRALS BY ETHNIC GROUP, 1986-87.

	Project Return		District-wide	
Group	N	%	N	%
American Indian	53	4.8%	1068	2.1%
Asian American	22	2.0	3881	7.5
African American	199	18.2	7913	15.3
European American	795	72.8	37907	73.0
Hispanic American	22	2.0	1111	2.1
Totals	1091	100.0%	51880	100.0%

Asian American students are underrepresented compared to their proportion in the district. European American student percentages are essentially comparable. American Indian and African American are slightly overrepresented among students referred to Project Return. However, Table 7.0 (p. 11) shows a substantial reduction in that overrepresentation during 1986-87 when compared to 1985-86.

Table 3.0

DISTRIBUTION OF REFERRALS BY SEX, 1986-87

SEX	N	%	86-87 ENROLLMENT	%
Male	576	52.8%	26,615	51.3%
Female	515	47.2	25,265	48.7
Totals	1091	100.0%	51,880	100.0%

Table 4.0

DISTRIBUTION OF REFERRALS
BY PORTLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT GEOGRAPHIC AREAS, 1986-87

AREA	N	%	86-87 ENROLLMENT	%
North	346	31.7%	10,583	20.4%
Northeast	330	30.2	16,082	31.0
Northwest	10	1.0	1,245	2.4
Southeast	366	33.5	18,056	34.8
Southwest	39	3.6	5,914	11.4
Totals	1091	100.0%	51,880	100.0%

Table 5.0

DISPOSITION OF REFERRALS, 1986-87

	N	%	N	%
Returned to School			614	56.3%
Public School	402	36.8%		
Alternative School	212	19.4		
Not continued in School			477	43.7
Awaiting Placement	141	12.9		
Withdrawn,Moved, Unable to locate	240	21.9		
Refused Services	96	8.8		
TOTALS	1091	100.0%	1091	100.0%

Students categorized as "refused services" represent a number of students who simply objected to being handled by Project Return. The lack of consequences for this particular disregard for the law contributes to the dilemma faced by local law enforcement in trying to play a role in the program's first year. There simply was no consequence that was enforceable. Thus, we see a rather significant percentage (8.8%) who appear intent on remaining outside the formal educational processes.

Contrasting Year One (1985-86) With Year Two (1986-87)

The foregoing description of the services in Project Return are given context by the data presented in tables 6.0 through 12.0 which compare distributions and demographics between operations in 1985-86 (year one) and 1986-87 (year two).

Table 6.0

COMPARISON OF DISTRIBUTION OF REFERRALS
BY GRADE, YEAR 1 AND YEAR 2, 1985-86 AND 1986-87

GRADE	1985-86	PERCENTAGE	1986-87	PERCENTAGE
K	5	1.0%	16	1.5%
1	24	4.9	30	2.7
2	15	3.1	28	2.6
3	19	3.9	21	1.9
4	19	3.9	34	3.1
5	16	3.3	36	3.3
6	31	6.3	32	2.9
7	40	8.2	56	5.1
8	65	13.2	99	9.1
9	127	26.0	325	29.8
10	88	18.0	234	21.4
11	28	5.7	137	12.6
12	12	2.5	43	4.0
TOTAL	489	100.0%	1091	100.0%

Project Return more than doubled the number of students served from the first year to the second. Variation in the distribution across grades is only slight despite a 100% increase in the number served. The ninth grade consistently shows the greatest single grade percentage of referral traffic.

Table 6.1

COMPARISON OF REFERRAL DISTRIBUTION BY GRADE GROUPING
1985-86 AND 1986-87

Grade	1985-86	Percentage	1986-87	Percentage
K-5	98	20.0%	165	15.1%
6-8	136	27.8	187	17.2
9-12	255	52.2	739	67.7
TOTALS	489	100.0%	1091	100.0%

The middle school was identified as a surprising source for the disproportionate percentage of referrals in the first year of Project Return. Energy and additional program resources were directed toward the middle school population in 1986-87. It seems to have substantially reduced the percentage of middle school age referrals in the second year. Table 6.2 also suggests that part of the middle school age truants simply moved into the high school category.

Table 6.2

COMPARISON OF REFERRAL DISTRIBUTION BY GRADE GROUPING
1985-86 AND 1986-87

Grade	1985-86	Percentage	1986-87	Percentage
K-5	98	20.0%	165	15.1%
6-8	136	27.2	187	17.2
9-10	215	44.0	559	51.2
11-12	40	8.2	180	16.5
TOTALS	489	100.0%	1091	100.0%

Table 7.0

COMPARISON DISTRIBUTION OF REFERRALS
BY ETHNIC GROUP, 1985-86 and 1986-87.

Group	1985-86	%	1986-87	%	%Change
American Indian	18	3.7%	53	4.8%	+ 1.1%
Asian American	14	2.9	22	2.0	- 0.9
African American	123	25.2	199	18.2	- 7.0
European American	320	65.5	795	72.8	+ 7.3
Hispanic American	14	2.9	22	2.0	- 0.9
Totals	489	100.0%	1091	100.0%	0.0%

African Americans showed the greatest overrepresentation in Project Return referral data in 1985-86. African Americans also experienced the greatest decline in truancy in the second year data. The combination of the larger numbers in all categories over the previous year, a more well-trained staff, and a matured program indicate a basis for identifying the source of change in the disproportionate representation.

Table 8.0

COMPARISON DISTRIBUTION OF REFERRALS BY SEX,
YEAR 1 AND YEAR 2, 1985-86 and 1986-87.

SEX	1985-86	%	1986-87	%	%Change
Male	258	52.7%	576	52.8%	+0.1%
Female	231	47.3	515	47.2	-0.1
Totals	489	100.0%	1091	100.0%	0.0

Table 9.0

COMPARISON DISTRIBUTION OF REFERRALS BY GEOGRAPHY,
YEAR 1 AND YEAR 2, 1985-86 and 1986-87.

Area	1985-86	%	1986-87	%	%Change
North	183	37.4%	346	31.7%	- 5.7%
Northeast	142	29.0	330	30.2	+ 1.2
Northwest	20	4.1	10	1.0	- 3.1
Southeast	115	23.5	366	33.5	+10.0
Southwest	29	5.9	39	3.6	- 2.3
Totals	489	100.0%	1091	100.0%	0.0

Similar to and perhaps commensurate with the decline in ethnic population overrepresentation, the decline in North Portland referrals appears to be the result of intense efforts in targeted areas. In 1986-87 Project Return targeted its resources in the areas it had overrepresentation. Reductions in both North Portland and among African American populations suggest a timely and effective deployment of resources.

Table 10.0

COMPOSITE OF REFERRAL DISPOSITION
SPRING, 1986 and SPRING, 1987

	Spring, 1986		Spring, 1987	
Continued in School	292	(59.7%)	614	(56.3%)
Not Continued in School	197	(40.3%)	477	(43.7%)
TOTALS	489		1091	

The decline in the percentage of students referred who were re-enrolled through Project Return in 1986-87 (56.3%) compared with 1985-86 (59.7%) is only slight. It is starkly contrasted, however, with the 123.1% increase in students served in the second year. The 614 students returned to school in 1986-87 are equivalent to approximately twenty-five average district classrooms.

Table 10.1

ANALYSIS OF COMPARISON OF FINAL REFERRAL DISPOSITION, 1985-86 AND 1986-87

Referral Disposition, Spring, 1986

	N	%	N	%
Continued in School			292	59.7%
Public School	207	45.2%		
Alternative School	85	4.6		
Not continued in School			197	40.3
Awaiting Placement	134	27.4		
Withdrawn,Moved, Unable to locate	47	9.6		
Refused Services	16	3.3		
TOTALS	489	100.0%	489	100.0%

Disposition of Referrals, Spring, 1987

	N	%	N	%
Continued in School			614	56.3%
Public School	402	36.8%		
Alternative School	212	19.4		
Not continued in School			477	43.7
Awaiting Placement	141	12.9		
Withdrawn,Moved, Unable to locate	240	21.9		
Refused Services	96	8.8		
TOTALS	1091	100.0%	1091	100.0%

FOLLOW-UP STUDY RESULTS

A special Follow-up Study on Project Return students referred in 1985-86 was conducted in the Fall of the next school year. The data from this follow-up study show two things: a deliberate focus by program staff to insure that resources spent in locating and returning students to school is well placed; Strategies employed in 1985-86 appear to be effective in student retention.

The following data reflect the disposition of referrals on students receiving services in 1985-86 through Project Return after five months (i.e. As of November, 1986).

Table 11.0

FOLLOW-UP COMPARISON DISTRIBUTION OF REFERRALS, SPRING 1986 AND FALL, 1986

REFERRAL DISPOSITION, SPRING, 1986	N	%	N	%
Continued in School			292	59.7%
Public School	207	45.2%		
Alternative School	85	4.6		
Not continued in School			197	40.3
Awaiting Placement	134	27.4		
Withdrawn,Moved, Unable to locate	47	9.6		
Refused Services	16	3.3		
TOTALS	489	100.0%	489	100.0%

Table 11.1

FOLLOW-UP ANALYSIS OF REFERRAL DISPOSITION: FALL, 1986

	N	%	N	%
Continued in School			276	56.4%
Public School	217	45.2%		
Public Alternative	22	4.6		
Private School	37	7.7		
Not continued in School			213	43.6
Awaiting Placement	74	8.1		
Withdrawn,Moved, Unable to locate	136	26.5		
Refused Services	3	0.6		
TOTALS	489	100.0%	489	100.0%

Table 11.2

COMPOSITE OF FOLLOW-UP ON REFERRAL DISPOSITION, SPRING, 1986 AND FALL, 1986

	Spring, 1986	Fall, 1986
Continued in School	292 (59.7%)	276 (56.4%)
Not Continued in School	197 (40.3%)	213 (43.6%)
TOTALS	489	489

This rudimentary analysis offers the research a basis for observing trend data over the next several years. What we see here is a very high retention rate among those students placed back in the school. It is not known to what this can be attributed. Program staff believe the periodic follow-up by a counselor at the re-enrollment site and the careful attempt to match students to an appropriate setting contribute to a "sustained" return.

Better than ninety percent of students re-enrolled by the end of 1985-86 were continuing in school as of the Fall of the next school year.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Where Project Return has targeted its resources, it achieved reductions in the percentage of referrals in the targeted student category. Middle school intervention is appropriate and was effective in reducing a large number of non-attending students. Such intervention may well reduce the pool of "at risk" students in the high school grades in the coming years. Reductions in the percentage of referrals from North Portland and among African American students suggest effective use of 1985-86 data.

2. The frequency of truant/non-attending students is distributed across all grades. However, the majority of all referrals for Project Return reside in the ninth and tenth grades. Those grades remain an appropriate target for resource allocation.

3. The concern raised by 15.1% of Project Return referrals originating in grades K through five (15.1%) is diminished when we note that 21.4% of all referrals represent students who have moved away or cannot be located (Table 11.2).

4. Follow-up Study data indicate that a "sustained return" to an appropriate educational setting can be accomplished. However, Project Return clients often seem to have low SES suggesting a certain volatility in future stable attendance. A familial change in residence, employment or health is likely to affect student attendance and subsequent performance more dramatically than in other households. With a larger number of students "returned" to school in 1986-87, adequate resources need to be dedicated to sustain enrollment and program accomplishments.

5. The experience of project staff indicate that the earlier in the school year that students can be located and serviced, the better their chances for sustained re-enrollment.

6. Limitations in the accumulation of project data precluded more specific data analysis. For example, it is not possible to determine the ethnic group percentages of students who were/were not returned to school.

7. The Transition Classroom seems to have minimized the loss of students caused by delays in placements. Those delays are usually beyond the control of the program. This component reduced the possiblility of spending resources for second and third efforts at processing a student to accomplish the primary objective. The Transition Classroom invests time in orienting students to the expectations and commitment required for a successful re-enrollment.

8. School administrators acknowledge the value of Project Return. While they do not always share the same level of confidence regarding the ability of students to have a "sustained re-enrollment", they report the importance of the function of Project Return.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Continue the practice of deploying resources where the larger numbers of truant students are concentrated.

B. Expend substantial resources in the middle school grades as a means of preventing an increase in referrals in grades nine and ten. Intervene as early as possible and whenever practicable.

C. Keep data in such a way as to yield improved information on the disposition of referrals. Longitudinal data files should be initiated with the Transition Classroom population along with referral disposition follow-up for up to three years.

D. Increase interagency communication for the purpose of increasing the placement ratio for students receiving services. Publish and/or distribute ancillary and support services Publish and/or distribute information about local governmental and social agency programs (counseling, tutoring, housing, etc.) to all Project Return clients.

E. Explore the expansion of the Transition Classroom concept to a high school site to accomodate more high school students.

F. Improve reporting from school sites by establishing a network of contact people specifically assigned at frequently called upon schools.

G. Establish Computer Adaptive Testing for on-site periodic assessment of Transition Classroom students.

H. Add staff in the area of counseling for the purpose of additional intervention capability at various school sites for placement or follow-up support services.

APPENDIX A

Oregon Revised Statutes 339.065, 339.080

339.065 Estimates of attendance; irregular attendance; excused absences. (1) In estimating regular attendance for purposes of the compulsory attendance provisions of ORS 339.005 to 339.145, 339.410, 339.420 and 339.990, the principal or teacher shall consider all unexcused absences. Eight unexcused one-half day absences in any four-week period during which the school is in session shall be considered irregular attendance.

(2) An absence may be excused by a principal or teacher if the absence is caused by the pupil's sickness, by the sickness of some member of the pupil's family or by an emergency. A principal or teacher may also excuse absences for other reasons where satisfactory arrangements are made in advance of the absence.

(3) Any pupil may be excused from attendance by the district school board for a period not to exceed five days in a term of three months or not to exceed 10 days in any term of at least six months. Any such excuse shall be in writing directed to the principal of the school which the pupil attends. [1965 c.100 §281; 1973 c.728 §4]

339.070 [Repealed by 1963 c.544 §52]

339.080 Nonattendance notice to parents and school officials. (1) Except as provided in ORS 339.030, in case any parent or other person in parental relation fails to send any child under his control to the public school, the attendance supervisor, within 24 hours after notification from the proper authority of the failure, shall give formal written notice in person or by registered or certified mail to the parent or other person. The notice shall state that the child must appear at the public school on the next school day following the receipt of the notice. The notice shall inform the parent or other person that regular attendance at school must be maintained during the remainder of the school year.

(2) At the same time notice is given to the parent or other person, the attendance supervisor shall notify the city superintendent or principal, as suitable, of the fact of the notice. The superintendent or principal shall notify the attendance supervisor of any failure on the part of the parent or other person to comply with the notice. [Amended by 1965 c.100 §282]

APPENDIX B

Diagrams of Referral Distribution
by Grade Grouping

DIAGRAM 1.3 DISTRIBUTION OF REFERRALS by Grade Cluster

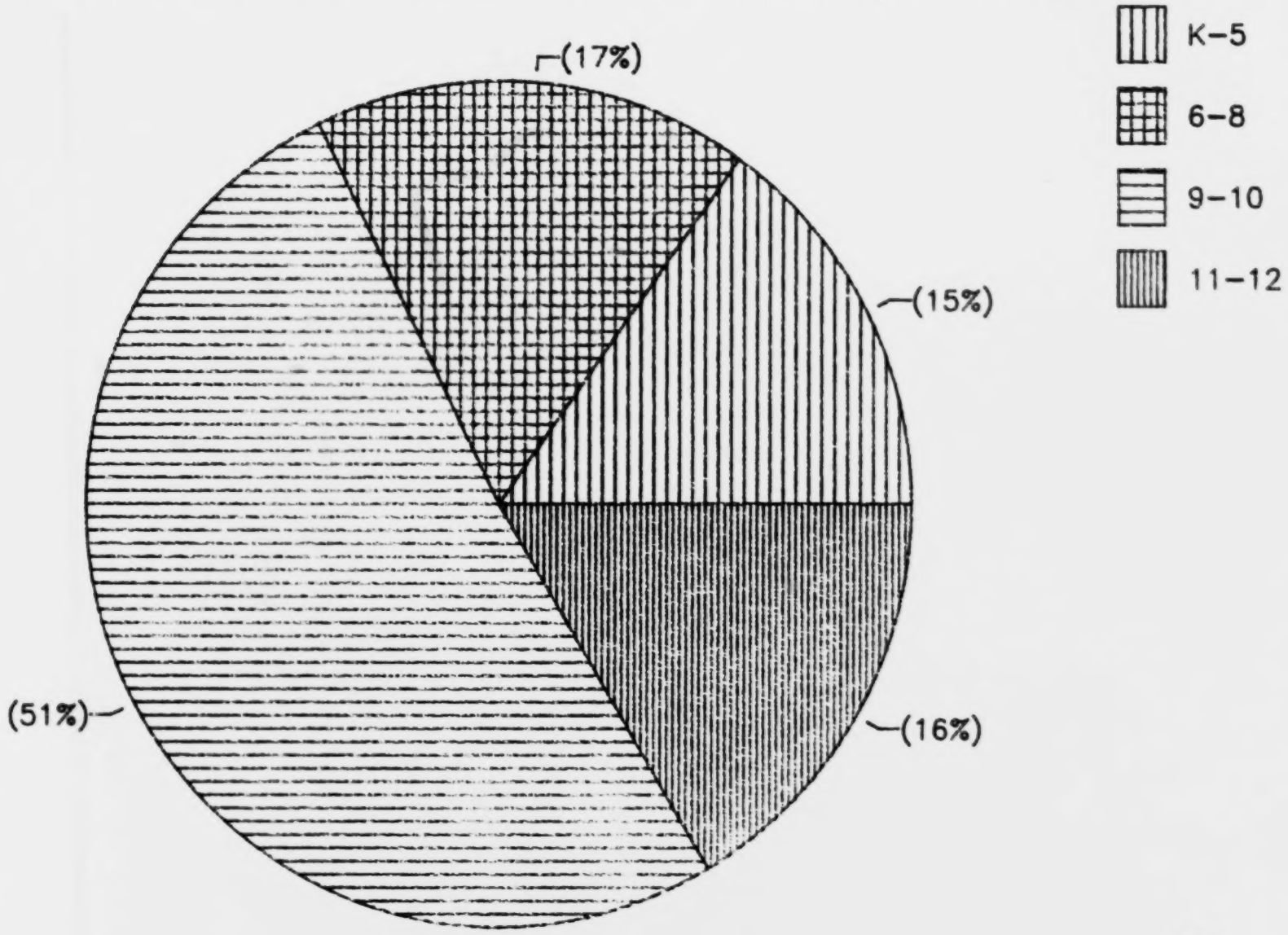

DIAGRAM 1.2 DISTRIBUTION OF REFERRALS by Grade Cluster